

Fishlake National Forest

DRAFT Setting, Niche, & Challenge Statement

April 9, 2004

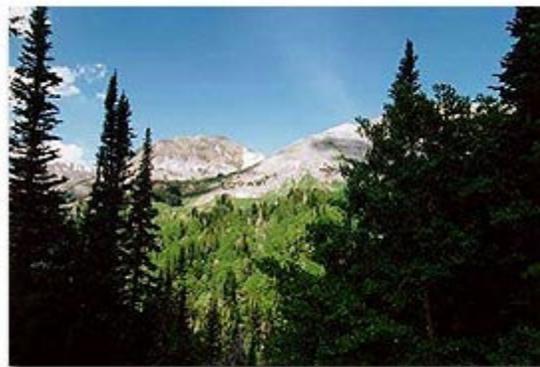
Broad Vision Statement

The Fishlake National Forest (FNF) is a beautiful and diverse part of Southern Utah. It provides high quality water to the region and diverse recreation, hunting, and fishing opportunities to the nation. The FNF is also a “working” forest. Livestock grazing, timber management, mineral, and special forest product opportunities are provided in a sustainable manner. Management of the Forest recognizes and values the fundamental components of soil, water, air, fish, and wildlife. Management of the Forest is sustainable with consideration of natural climate and disturbance regimes.

Draft “Setting” Statements

The Fishlake National Forest is located in central Utah, near the towns of Richfield, Fillmore, Beaver, and Loa. Forest Service offices are located in each of these towns. I-70 runs through the middle of the Forest and I-15 runs along the west side.

Rising above the valleys in central Utah, the mountains and elevated plateaus within the Fishlake National Forest hold hidden niches of beauty and solitude. Water is especially important in this semiarid climate and small streams "feed" the valleys and surrounding communities. Canyons cut by these streams have colorful walls revealing a variety of geology. There is a mix of sedimentary and volcanic rocks as this is the transition zone between the Colorado Plateau and the Basin & Range Provinces. In the Tushar Mountains, peaks exceed 12,000 feet in elevation.



The Fishlake has two National Recreation Trails: Fish Lake shoreline trail and the Skyline Trail in the Tushar Mountains. The Skyline offers an alpine setting amid peaks over 12,000 feet. The Paiute ATV Trail is a 230-mile loop that winds over three mountain ranges with side trails to communities with services. It is a combination of roads open to use by off-highway vehicles and trails wide enough for all-terrain vehicles (ATV's). 4x4 vehicles can use the road portions of this designated route. In the eastern part of the Forest, the Great Western Trail crosses the Fishlake on its way to the Mexican border from Canada. It also accommodates vehicle, horse, and foot traffic.



Nineteen National Forest campgrounds offer opportunities for family and group camping. Sites range in size from 7 to 68 units and in elevation from 5,500 to 9,300 feet. Dispersed camping is also available throughout much of the Forest. Fish Lake and nearby Johnson Valley Reservoir are the most visited places on the Forest for camping and fishing. Mackinaw and rainbow trout fishing is especially popular.

Two tracked roads and trails offer opportunities to discover beautiful niches of solitude using four-wheel drives, ATV's, motorcycles or horses. Mountain biking activity is growing with rides ranging from a paved road at Fish Lake to trails with over 5,000 feet elevation change. Over 1,100 miles of hiking trails offer a variety of hiking, backpacking and horseback opportunities. Thousands of hunters come to the Forest each fall for deer and elk hunting. Wildlife viewing and photography is growing in popularity in the area.

During winter and spring, much of the precipitation comes in the form of snow, with a deep snowpack accumulating in many of the high elevations. By late spring, temperatures warm up in the canyon country and low elevations, while the mountain snowpack begins to melt. The high mountain roads and trails are not normally free of snow until mid to late June. Summer brings warm temperatures to most areas, with hot temperatures in the canyon country. Afternoon thunderstorms become common by June and can be expected into September. With these storms, flash flooding is a possible hazard in gullies and narrow canyons.



Across 1.45 million acres, the scenery varies from semi-desert to alpine. Lower elevation lands of rock, sage, pinyon pine and juniper appear desert-like especially in the southeast corner of the Forest with its red cliffs. About half of the Forest is covered with aspen and evergreen trees interspersed with meadows and low sage openings.

Draft “Niche” Statements

Forest-wide Niches

The Fishlake National Forest is known for its beautiful aspen forests, Scenic Byways, and trails for motorized and non-motorized use. (*Utahtravelcenter.com*)

The Fishlake NF has some of the best elk hunting (and photo opportunities) (*Public Comments (Junction)*) in the State of Utah. The top three bulls in the state came from the Fishlake Forest. (*Public Comments (Fillmore)*)

The Fishlake NF contains some of the best examples of rock art (pictographs, pectoglyphs) in the region. (*Public Comments (Fillmore)*)

Local Area Niches

The Fishlake has two National Recreation Trails: Fish Lake shoreline trail and the Skyline Trail in the Tushar Mountains. (*Public Comments (Loa), Wildernet.com*)

The Paiute ATV Trail is a 230-mile loop with side trails to communities with services. The trail has national significance. (*Public Comments (Beaver, Junction, Fillmore, Richfield)*). In the eastern part of

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the Forest, the Great Western Trail crosses the Fishlake on its way to the Mexican border from Canada. It also accommodates vehicle, horse and foot traffic. (*Public Comments (Loa), Wildernet.com*)

The Rocky Mountain ATV Jamboree is held in September of each year. This event attracts visitors from across the nation and even some international interest. (*Public Comments (Beaver), Fishlake NF employees*)

Best geothermal location in the state. (*Public Comments (Junction)*)

Delano Peak is the 3rd highest mountain in Utah. (*Public Comments (Junction)*)



The red rock canyons are very rugged and scenic. (*Public Comments (Fillmore)*)

The eastern edge of the Fishlake forest is a transition zone from the High Utah Plateau and the Colorado Plateau ecological regions. This area is home to many rare and endemic plant species forming a unique botanical resource that is not duplicated in the Nation. (*Fishlake NF employees*)

Fish Lake stretches for five and one half miles within the Fish Lake Basin. The Basin is home to 3 resorts, 4 campgrounds, 7 picnic areas, and 125 recreation summer homes. The Basin is best known for the fantastic “world-class” fishing in the deep, cold waters of Fish Lake. Even in the winter, the ice fishing is good. (*Fishlake National Forest, Points of Interest map, 1989 (Public Comments (Loa))*)

Portal to the largest coal mine in Utah (*Regional Office Meeting*)

Lifeline for water for local communities (*RO*)

Repository of great cultural artifacts from Fremont, Anasazi, Ute, and Piute cultures (*RO*)

Contains world-class geological features (*RO*)

Draft “Challenge” Statements

Large visitation from large urban centers (Wasatch Front) – non-resident use without acknowledging the residual impacts (*RO*)